

## **REMARKS**

Claims 1-9, 11-22 and 24-29 are pending. Claims 8, 11, 18, 21 and 24 are amended. Claims 10 and 23 are cancelled. No new matter is submitted. Accordingly, entry and consideration of the amendment are respectfully requested.

Applicants appreciate the indication of claims 1-7, 11-20 and 25-29 as allowed in the Office Action.

Applicants further appreciate the indication of claims 9-10 and 22-24 as allowable if rewritten into independent form to include the features of any base and intervening claims.

By this amendment, claim 10 is cancelled and the features thereof incorporated into independent claim 8, thus rendering claim 8 allowable per the Office Action. Claim 9 depends directly from claim 8. The amendment to claim 8 obviates any rejection thereof based on U.S. Patent No. 5,258,006 to Rydell, et al. (hereafter "Rydell"), which the Office Action concedes does not have a quick connect/quick release coupling at a proximal end of the second jaw as now recited in Applicants' claim 8. Accordingly, withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. 102(b) rejection of claim 8 based on Rydell is respectfully requested.

The amendment to claim 8 also obviates any rejection thereof based on U.S. Patent Application No. 2005/0090817 to Phan (hereafter "Phan"), which the Office Action concedes does not have a quick connect/quick release coupling at a proximal end of the second jaw as now recited in Applicants' claim 8. Accordingly, withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. 102(e) rejection of claim 8 based on Phan is respectfully requested.

By this amendment, claim 23 is cancelled and the features thereof incorporated into independent claim 21, thus rendering claim 21 allowable per the Office Action. The amendment to claim 21 obviates any rejection thereof based on U.S. Patent No. 6,698,643 to Whitman

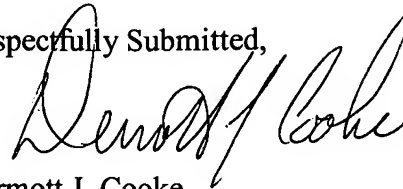
(hereafter “Whitman”), which the Office Action concedes does not have a distal end of an actuation mechanism releasably coupled to a proximal end of a stapler head on which is carried at least the second jaw of said stapler head, as now recited in Applicants’ claim 21. Claim 22 and 24, as amended, depend directly from claim 21. Accordingly, withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. 102(e) rejection of claims 21 and 22 based on Whitman is respectfully requested.

Claims 11 and 21 are amended to delete the colon in line 5 of each, respectively, thereby obviating the objections posed thereto in the Office Action. Claim 18 is amended to insert the appropriate underlining of the term “electrical”, which underlining was inadvertently omitted in the prior March 2, 2006 amendment filed in this application. Claim 18 is also amended to re-insert a period “.” At the end of the claim, which period was either previously inadvertently omitted or deleted during prosecution hereof. All of the objections posed in the Office Action have thus been obviated by the amendments made herein. Accordingly, withdrawal of the objections to claims 11, 18 and 21 is respectfully requested.

Applicants submit that all remaining claims are patentable in view of the amendments and remarks made herein. Accordingly, prompt allowance of claims 1-9, 11-22, and 24-29 is respectfully solicited.

Should the Examiner determine that anything further is required to place the application in even better form for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dermott J. Cooke". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Dermott" being more prominent than the last name "Cooke".

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